

L E T T E R S

TO THE

HIGH AND MIGHTY

UNITED STATES

OF

A M E R I C A.





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TO THE  
HIGH AND MIGHTY  
UNITED STATES  
OF  
A M E R I C A;

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By I N T E G E R,  
Candidate for the Office of  
Accomptant General to their Excellencies  
THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

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“ Power usurp’d, like stolen delight,  
“ Is more bewitching than the right ;  
“ And when the times begin to alter,  
“ None rise so high as from the halter.”

HUDIBRAS.

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IN TESTE ME

TO THE



UNITED STATES

OF

A M E R I C A

NAVY

Department of the Navy

Secretary of the Navy

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

For the purpose of the Navy, the Secretary of the Navy is authorized to receive and pay the expenses of the Navy, and to make such other orders and regulations as may be necessary for the service of the Navy.

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NEW YORK, THURSDAY

AND, REGISTERED, IN THE OFFICE OF THE

RECORDS AND GENERAL INVESTIGATION

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## LETTERS.

### LETTER I.

WHILE I have been reviewing the proceedings of the CONGRESS, I have frequently thought, that the Gentlemen, who compose it, are prompt schemers, clever disputants, florid orators, with fifty fine qualities besides, and yet, after all, they are but dull *accomptants*. Their disregard of a little common arithmetic has tended more to render their vast designs abortive, than people, who are content with lower speculations, could have suspected from men of their immense talents and pretensions. The truth is, as with some other ingenious people, their imagination cannot descend to such mean business, as the stating and reckoning of sums; and, therefore, they suppose, that either calling for money at random, or calling a substance by the name of money, which, for the

B soul

foul of me, I believe to be nothing better than a common piece of paper, will fully answer every purpose of war and peace, and settle all things upon their favourite foundation. Now, as the gentlemen of the Congress seem to have their hands too full at present to descend to such vulgar amusement as a speculation formed upon a little vulgar arithmetic, and yet may be glad to have the matter in the gross, I propose myself a candidate for the office of *acomptant general* to the HIGH AND MIGHTY UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA, and, by way of strengthening my pretensions, will give them a short detail of the expences and disbursements that will necessarily attend our grand and flourishing Empire. I have no doubt of success, from the specimen I shall offer of my abilities, and will be content with the salary I beg leave to subjoin, and which I must presume will be thought very moderate, when the public dignity of this vast Continent, from its Eastern shore to the Straits of Annian and the South Sea, is justly considered.

In the first place, I have calculated, that we must have an ARMY and a NAVY:—an *army*, sufficient to expel all the armies of Britain and her Allies, as well as to secure us from all *other* invasions; and a *navy*, equal to the task of defending our own coasts from insult, and of protecting our trade at sea. Taking this as granted by every man of common sense, and certainly by men of Congressional wisdom, I proceed to put down their estimates in pounds, shillings and pence; and, because it is a more general medium, I shall calculate the whole in *sterling*.

To



To defend the extensive Sea-Coast of our vast Empire, our politicians have talked of at least 100,000 men. But I choose rather to follow the worthy Congress, who certainly must understand that matter much better from their long experience in the military way, and will only say 50,000 men, which they have proposed shall form the stated, standing army of our great and understanding States. To make the affair as cheap as possible, I will calculate, that each regiment is to consist of 1000 men, like the regiments in Spain, and that each man is to have but nine pence a day. It will then be found, that such a regiment, properly officered, will cost us full 20,000*l.* a year; not to dwell upon raising, arming, and cloathing these corps, which would amount, at least, to a fourth part more money. The expence of our army, consisting of 50 such regiments, would be, year by year, *only* a million sterling.

Come we next to our navy, by which we are to drive off the British fleet, and command respect upon *our own* great ocean. The author of Common Sense, our political oracle, says, that “ 50 or 60 ships, mounting 20, 30, 40, or 50 guns, with a *few* guard-ships, would keep up “ a *sufficient* navy.” A worthy friend of mine, whom I intend to bring forward as my *deputy accomptant general* (and deputies are commonly the principals in business), has calculated for me, that, as the British navy consists of full *two hundred and twenty four* ships, of which *twenty-one* carry from 80 to 100 guns, we certainly cannot contend with those *hearts of oak*, and yet make a proper allowance too for our courage,

with a less number than *one hundred and nine*. I will only take the sum of his calculation (for debtors and ladies hate long accounts) which he has arranged, from pretty exact *data*, in the following manner :

To BUILDING the Grand American NAVY.

|                                                                          |                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| To 55 ships of 50 guns<br>each, at 14,355l. sterling,<br>each ship,      | } £. 789,525 0 0 |
| To 30 ships of 74 guns<br>each, at 27,000l. sterling,<br>each ship,      | } 716,000 0 0    |
| To 12 frigates of 32 guns<br>each, at 7,480l. sterling,<br>each frigate, | } 89,760 0 0     |
| To 12 frigates of 20 guns<br>each, at 4370l. sterling,<br>each frigate,  | } 52,440 0 0     |
|                                                                          | <hr/>            |
| Total                                                                    | £. 1,647,725 0 0 |
| Allow one third for cannon<br>and necessary furniture,                   | } 542,575 0 0    |
|                                                                          | <hr/>            |
| First cost of the navy,                                                  | £. 2,190,300 0 0 |

I am afraid my intended deputy has calculated the matter rather too low;—but let it pass; I am sure it is a more just and *solid* calculation than ever was yet made by my intended High and Mighty Masters.

I come next to the annual expence of these said ships, which my deputy has reckoned up as follows :

To

TO ANNUAL EXPENCE of the Grand American  
NAVY.

|                                                                                        |                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| To annual expence of 55<br>ships of 50 guns, at<br>18,200l. sterl. <i>per</i> ship,    | } £. 1,001,000 0 0 |
| <i>Ditto</i> of 30 ships of 74<br>guns, at 33,800l. sterl.<br><i>per</i> ship,         | } 1,014,000 0 0    |
| <i>Ditto</i> of 12 frigates of 32<br>guns, at 11,440l. sterl.<br><i>per</i> frigate,   | } 137,280 0 0      |
| <i>Ditto</i> of 12 frigates of 20<br>guns, at 8,320l. sterling,<br><i>per</i> frigate, | } 99840, 0 0       |
| <hr/>                                                                                  |                    |
| Total,                                                                                 | £. 2,252,120 0 0   |

As an accomptant, I am pleased to see such a fine row of figures, for I really have too much patriotism to wish for a *sinecure* profession: and especially where the *Joes* and the *Dollars* are likely to run about: in all which, who can blame me?—For I only copy my masters.

Thus much for the materials of warfare: now for *civil* things.

We are arrived (say the Congress) at competent maturity, and are grown up, after the fashion of the country, into THIRTEEN tall States, aiming to over-look, I would not say over-reach, all our neighbours. Now, thirteen different States must have so many different governments; and each of them must set up a *civil establishment*, proportionate to its respective grandeur. And  
as

as we form such a great figure in the map of the world, it is proper we should form a suitable figure in the *dignities* of the world. But, putting that off for convenience sake to another opportunity, we will only take at present, what will be absolutely necessary for preserving mere existence in the world, and frame our *civil* policy upon that scale.

First then, each State must provide for its respective deputies at Congress, what is suitable to their high rank and importance; for our gentlemen of Congress are rather too wise to be in love with all that patriotism, which, like old Andrew Marvel, works for nothing. I am too old myself to believe such stuff; and, if you will forgive a quibble, it is too *marvellous*, indeed, for our days. But to proceed in our business:

I calculate, that, upon an average, each of the High and Mighty States must support at Congress at least *four* deputies, who may (if they like it) be all *knights of independence*, or knights of any thing else, for what I care. As there are no *real* figures in the order, whatever figures they make beside, they will not embarrass my account. Now to each of these deputies, it is impossible, considering journies, rank, expences, &c. to allow less than 2000l. sterling *per annum*. Fifty two deputies, therefore, representing all the States, at this *ratio*, will occasion an article upon our civil list of 104,000l. *per annum*: and little enough too, considering all the good they intend to do us. But let that pass: it is above my calculation, and has nothing to do with arithmetic.



We must next provide for our *thirteen governors*. These must not be more *High* and *Mighty* than our other *Higs* and *Mighties*; and yet, to keep state and a table, at which a body may take a bit now and then, they ought not to be less. Suppose them upon the same footing; and we must put down 26,000*l.* sterling *per annum*, on their account.

I fear to tire your patience, or I would enter very particularly into the expences of the Civil Establishment, in all the inferior branches of every State. But I will give you a round sum of 10,000*l.* for each government, which, I am sure, every man, who knows things, will allow to be much below the mark. This charge, then, will amount to 130,000*l.* sterling *per annum*.

Ambassadors, &c. to foreign States, whose business it is to cultivate a good understanding for the sake of trade, must next be considered: and we must consider them as High and Mighty States ought, in a manner suitable to our dignity. We must even have an ambassador to Great Britain itself, when affairs are settled as we have planned them; and we ought, for many reasons, to make him shine at that court with peculiar lustre. The usual expence of an ambassador extraordinary is full 8000*l.* sterling *per annum*, exclusive of money paid for *secret services*, for intelligence, &c. We must employ one of this rank at the three great European courts of London, Paris, and Madrid, at least; and these will stand us in, with contingences, full (and I believe more than) 30,000*l.* *per annum*. We must likewise establish *envoys* in Holland and Portugal,

Portugal, *residents* at Naples, Leghorn, Venice, Hamburgh, &c. and *consuls* at all the principal trading ports in Europe. To save other people the trouble of reckoning, I can assure them, that all these necessary gentlemen cannot be supported in their respective stations at a less expence than 90,000*l.* sterling *per annum*. I know that I am below the mark ; but I would not wish to discourage affairs.

I recollect too, that we have *Indians* in our rear, who will be apt to give us a kick, if we don't make it worth their while to be quiet. Britain used to allow them considerable presents ; and we must not allow them less. Perhaps, we must exceed the British generosity, in order to attach them perfectly to our interests. Those presents, and other contingent expences, amounted annually to at least 10,000*l.* sterling. Say 10,000*l.* *per annum* ; though I believe the amount must have been considerably more.

But, after all this load of charge, I perceive we have provided for no *contingences*, arising from a war and a thousand other accidents in this vexatious world ; and perhaps they cannot be calculated easily, or easily provided for. To triumph over Britain in the present quarrel, will cost us a trifle ; and God knows what the expence will be, before we have run the gauntlet with all the other European powers. But this is a melancholy business, and therefore let us huddle it over. I have lived too long in the world not to see, that a pleasant *white lye* has a better reception than a thousand unwelcome truths : and I don't choose to spoil my fortune.

Take

Take the sum of what has been said, and the state of things will be as follows :

|                                                                                                         |                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| To annual expence of the }<br>army,                                                                     | £. 1,000,000 0 0 |
| To ditto, navy,                                                                                         | 2,252,120 0 0    |
| To grand deputies of }<br>CONGRESS,                                                                     | 104,000 0 0      |
| To 13 governors,                                                                                        | 26,000 0 0       |
| To 13 civil establishments,                                                                             | 130,000 0 0      |
| To ambassadors, &c.                                                                                     | 90,000 0 0       |
| To Indians, &c.                                                                                         | 10,000 0 0       |
| To treasurers of Congress, }<br>deputies, clerks, and o- }<br>ther incidental charges }<br>in Congress, | 10,000 0 0       |
| To the accomptant general,                                                                              | 1,000 0 0        |
| Annual expence,                                                                                         | £. 3,623,120 0 0 |
| Add the <i>first cost</i> of the navy,                                                                  | 2,190,300 0 0    |
| First year's expence,                                                                                   | 5,813,420 0 0    |

Our PEACE-establishment requires almost the goodly sum of FOUR MILLIONS sterling *per annum*: and we must set off the first year at an expence of near SIX MILLIONS. But what will our WAR-establishment amount to? I vow, I cannot tell. But I am sure it cannot be less: it may probably be four times the sum; and especially if we feel bold.

But here comes *the question* (and a plaguy question it is) "How is all this vast sum to be raised?"—Why, by TAXES, undoubtedly. Did ever any STATES raise money without taxes? Was ever any country *protected* without taxes? Is



it possible to keep off foreign foes, to preserve a respectable appearance in the world, and to guard or extend our commerce, without taxes? 'Tis a part of our political creed, "that there can be no taxation where there is no representation: *ergo*, there *must be*, wherever it is. But I can name a country, which was nourished, settled, protected, fought for, secured, and all *without* taxes to—*that* country. It was some *other* country that paid the piper.—But let that pass; for I am only an accomptant.

"How must we get this ugly sum of near *four millions* a year provided for? And how is "the first cost of our great navy to be paid?" These are hard questions to a man of my understanding, but I will try at 'em.

In the first place, for the good of my country, which I value more than any man's eyes but my own, I propose, that the sum of *seventy odd* thousand pounds sterling, in cash and produce, remitted within this year or two past, by some of our Congress-gentlemen to France, against "a wet day," be ordered back again. This, indeed, would not do much; but it would do something. Certainly, the Messieurs *Adams* and Company could not object to it; no, nor the Congress neither—for "they are all honourable men."

In the next place, we must lay a tax upon our lands. And, as we have a domain almost as extensive as all Europe, who knows but we may, by proper management, be able to raise, by this land-tax, at least as much as half of it? For otherwise, why should we boast of our extensive lands, and acres, and the like?—A land-



tax, and a round one too, not like a quibbling quit-rent which we have sometimes paid and sometimes not, must come into the list of our *ways and means*.

Again; we must also have a *poll-tax*: and let me tell you, or rather the worthy Congress, that a tax of *twenty shillings* sterling a head *per annum*, upon all the bodies and souls in America (I mean *human* bodies and souls, for I would not tax *dogs*) would amount to, *something*. Indeed, the revenue on this score will be reduced by last year's transactions at least 30,000 polls, and I will suppose, that in the next, the loss will be considerable. But then the remedy is a short one—we have only to lay a double sum upon those that remain, and our account will stand better, perhaps, than before.

Besides these, we must establish an *excise* and *customs*, and must be careful to prevent all *smuggling* too; or this said frightful sum of FOUR MILLIONS sterling a year will run us aground. And then, the Lord have mercy upon us; for we can borrow no money to set us afloat again, because new powers are unsettled and precarious; and such powers never find credit, unless they are very remarkable for their honesty.

Upon second thoughts, and upon reviewing what I have said, I am afraid this cursed load of taxes, which we must unavoidably bear to support our new government, will sink us to the dogs. But yet it must go on: we can *but* be ruined at last. However, as I pique myself upon my honesty, I cannot help telling you one thing, which, whether you believe it or not, I am sure of; for I have *counted* it: and that is,

*our old mother-country could have supported and protected us at one TWENTIETH part of the expence, which it will cost us to defend and secure ourselves; and when we have done all that we can do, we shall not be ONE HUNDREDTH part so SECURE, nor a THOUSANDTH part so HAPPY, as we were before. But now I am speaking against my own office; and, therefore, I have done: and I believe you may wish that I should; but old men will prate. However, here is enough for the present; and so farewell.*

I N T E G E R.

L E T.

## L E T T E R II.

WHEN I was a young man, I remember to have been told of two or three odd fellows who met at a tavern, and, after passing a very agreeable evening together, took it into their heads to quarrel about the reckoning. They had all mutual obligations to one another, which made their dispute the more improper; and they had each of them, being in one partnership of trade, some common enemies, which rendered it totally imprudent. In short, whatever might come of it, quarrel they would, and quarrel they did. One said, *You are richest, and ought to pay most.* Another averred, *That the rest had drank most of the liquor, and that it was a shame to make him pay alike.* The third contented himself with heaving the flip. And the fourth declared, *That though he was youngest of all, and had indeed been put out apprentice by the rich one; yet, as he was now out of his time, and as considerable a partner as the best of them, he was resolved to convince them of his manhood, and swore by G——, he would pay nothing at all.* He further added, in language he had picked up by travelling, “*You imposing scoundrels, I have served you all for many years :*  
you

*you have grown rich only by my labours ; and if it had not been for me (though, by the bye, he was a lazy dog) you would have had nothing better than Oznaburgs to cover your a—s.*" The oldest of them, who was a mighty easy good-natured sort of man, and wished to settle every thing amicably, expostulated with the fiery youth, told him of the ungrateful returns he made to him for all his care over him, reminded him of how many scrapes and difficulties he had rescued him from, shewed him the danger of daring to fight with three better men than himself, assured him that above half the expence of the entertainment had been incurred for his sake, and, in short, promised him, that if he would but pay half a dollar to their five dollars a-piece, all should be well. No, nothing would do. Coaxing and reasoning only made him more headstrong and impertinent. My young gentleman, conscious of the abilities of his tongue (with the clamor of which he could at any time raise the whole parish) swore he would not pay a single copper; giving this for a reason, that *they had ordered the liquor, not he*; and adding, that though indeed he was young and hearty, and had drank the main of it, they should pay for the whole by themselves; and that in future he should renounce their company, break off all connexions, and set up for himself, not doubting but he should be able to carry away all the custom from the store. Indeed, the sly rogue had long had this matter in contemplation, and only waited for some opportunity to break with them: He therefore dared them to do their worst, and even threatened to lay open his part  
in



in their common trade to two or three of their rivals. His old friend, amazed at his impudent baseness and ingratitude, jumped up in a hurry to give him a box on the ear. So to it they went; till the young fellow, finding the other pretty tough (for he had always been a noted bruiser) and being most confoundedly thrashed himself, gave over the dispute, paid his half dollar (the other being too generous to insist upon more, notwithstanding his ill usage) and solicited that they would once more take him again by the hand as a friend.

Methinks I hear somebody saying, "What fine Canterbury tale has this old fellow got in his crotchets now?" Patience, neighbour, patience! If a young rogue deserves to be hated for such behaviour to his best friends, do you think the matter would be mended, if a large company of such folks should take it into their heads to do the like? I fancy not. However, as it is but a story, and as old men are fond of remembering what happened in their youth, e'en let it pass. It will do you no harm, however, to remember it too. So now for business.

I have been puzzling my poor brains of late about *Ways* and *Means* to support our new establishments, if we should find a little leisure to make any; and I honestly confessed, as you may recollect, some of my doubts about them. But, notwithstanding, right or wrong, I must do something for my said office of *accountant general*: and, to shew you how competent I am to the place, and how efficient I mean to be, I shall give you the respective *quotas* of our several states, according to the two establishments, which

which I lately proposed. I shall give *equal* quotas, leaving it to some of the wise heads, who have hitherto conducted us among the thorns, to establish the differences between province and province at another opportunity.

First, then, I find, that under the establishment of a *Congressional Government* (the expence of which I calculated would amount to near *four millions* sterling annually, in time of *peace*, and to near *six millions* sterling for the first year, without providing for any *war* or other contingencies) each province will have to raise, year by year 278,701l. 10s. 9d. *sterling*, and, including the *first cost* of the navy, 447,186l. 3s. *sterling* for the *first* year. But all this is a trifle, compared with the good, which our scheme of *Independence* has done and will do us. A man, who would not sacrifice his wife, his children, his goods, his life, to carry on the worthy Mr. *Adams's* plan of cursing the King, and defying Great-Britain (in the language of the wise convention of New-York) "deserves to be a slave, " and is entitled to nothing but tribulation and "anguish." Heaven be praised, that we have such righteous distributors of its vengeance among us! But 'tis enough to make all their hearts dance with joy, to reflect, that "if they "fall in the contest," with the *little dirty island* (as a famous patriot of that would-be Jerusalem, *Boston*, used to call it) "they shall be "happy with God and liberty in Heaven." I hope, by the bye, they will permit the good folks above to think a little for themselves and to choose their own company. And yet I am so much the friend of ~~my~~ dear brother patriots, that

that I can't help wishing them a speedy journey, and all the happiness that heaven can afford them.—But let us descend from these altitudes and mind our accounts.

In the second place, under *Dictatorial* or *Protectorial Government*, I have calculated that the expence will be more than doubled upon us; only with this convenience, that there will be abundantly less trouble in raising it, than in any other way. My Lord Protector has only to send out his orders, and the thing is done. Each province in this case, if *quotas* and *forms* be established, will have to raise near 900,000*l.* *sterling* in the *first* year, and more than 500,000*l.* *sterling* every year afterwards, to make no account of *wars* and such like silly incidents, which, the author of Common Sense gravely assures us, never can happen. And what is half a million a year, or a whole million, to some of our great and flourishing states, which command “the Atlantic Oriental surge, and the  
“ Occidental South Sea shore, which are the  
“ peculiar care of Heaven, the point of sight  
“ of angels, the envy of wondering worlds,  
“ the glory of mortal men, the resurrection of  
“ setting empire, the very paragon of meek  
“ and holy religion, and the excellence of the  
“ earth itself.”—O this glorious style, how it enchants one! 'Tis really, 'tis really too sublime for common mortals: the people that use it, should be translated from the earth. Like Orpheus, they would charm the other world with their harmony of eloquence.—But I must attend my accounts.

D

This



This calculation exhibits what may be the costs and charges of our *independence*. I had just now an odd whim in my noddle; and that was, to calculate what sum or sums of money our *dependence* would have stood us in.

I have heard it often said by the society of *Quid Nuncs*, that Great-Britain would have relinquished many things, which we set off in our career by complaining of, and would have continued all the protection, defence, and security, which we once enjoyed under her, if the Colonies would have contributed an aggregate sum of about 300,000*l. per annum*. This sum, divided among our present High and Mighty States, would have amounted to about 20,000*l. per annum* a-piece. In the name of wonder, how could Britain be so stupid as to suppose, that we could agree to such a quiddity of a reckoning as this? What opportunity would such a paltry sum have afforded us of shewing to the world our opulence, strength, and grandeur? How could we convince foreign states, by settling so trifling an amount, that (in the words of the brethren of the fish-kill) "we have contributed to raise the power of Britain, that its wealth is owing to our industry, and that its grandeur has been augmented by our exertions?" No, no. Let us have no dabbling in such rascally little sums, say I. What a poor figure should I make, as the grand continental accomptant, to rub the dust off my spectacles, and sit down in state to calculate farthings? *Integer* is my name, and *integral* sums of good honest *pounds*, or of *joes* and *half-joes*, shall be my profession. I love *lumping* of cash, and always



ways delight in *weighty* concerns; and so do my best friends in Congress, as is evident by their wisdom in changing *light* paper for the good old gold and silver *solids*. And so, as I was saying, shall we condescend to be protected by the fleets and armies of Britain; when, for a few millions a year, and the like, we may have the pleasure of fitting out and paying our own? No, let us make a hole through the earth, and creep out to the other side, and settle a new world, rather than submit to such shabby terms as these. Shall we pay indeed only 20,000*l. sterling*, instead of 500,000*l.*; when we are able to challenge and defy Great-Britain and all her powers together? We the High and Mighty States of America contribute only 20,000*l. a-piece*; when that little whirl-gig of an island Great-Britain, whom we have raised from nothing, contributes upon occasion more than as many millions! Bless me; I believe we could raise the money, only by shearing the woolly locks of our negroes, and manufacturing them into stockings. This would be as good too as "increasing the breed of "sheep;" and then we might eat mutton not quite so *sparingly*. I dare say, all the world would encourage our stocking manufacture.

I must conclude, therefore, from the respect I have for the profundity of wisdom we shew upon the present occasion, that we ought to insist upon paying, state by state, full 500,000*l. per annum*, rather than the insignificant one of 20,000*l.*; and I will aver, in the language of the great Convention, that he who will not fight to pay the greater sum instead of the lesser, for the ho-

nour and magnificence of America, "deserves  
 " to be a slave, and is fit only for a beast of  
 " burden to the rest of mankind."

You see how much I am interested in a good large account. To tell you the truth, we have such a set of hungry patriots at present upon our roll, that your 20,000*l.* *per* province, would not supply half of them with bread and cheese. "All trades must live;" and so must the trade of patriotism. Indeed, it was such a thriving trade for a time, that every body rushed into it, as people do into other trades that bring riches: so that at present it is rather overstocked. We have taylor and shoemakers, and parsons, and quack-doctors, and chimney-sweepers, and lawyers, and all the worthies of the country pressing in upon us: and it is past my calculation, how we shall provide for them all; and especially as they all want to be generals, and colonels, and the Lord knows who. I have indeed given a hint to some of our great folks, which seems to merit consideration, as it promises to procure us a very adequate supply; and it is briefly this. When we have driven off the British troops and navy, and consequently fully established our own independence, what a fine opportunity will it afford our heroes to attack the *Spanish West-Indies*, and to make a trip to *Mexico* and *Peru*? we should have the whole country join us; and I make no doubt should extend our empire from *Hudson's-Bay*, *Labradore* and the *ultima Thule* of America towards the north, through the immense regions of the present *United States* (reckoning the domains to the South Sea from the Atlantic) all over *Louisiana*,  
*Mexico*,

*Mexico, Peru, Chili, Paraguay, Brazil*, down to *Patagonia* and *Cape Horne*: and all the islands would follow of course. I protest, my head grows dizzy at the amazing prospect, which opens to my view; but at the same time I feel a secret joy in the thought of bringing to account, the riches, the treasures, and the mines of *Potosi* and *Peru*. I look upon our success as certain, for we have only to conquer Britain, and then who's afraid of Spain? I think I can calculate already, that the *accountant general*, or *financier general* (then if you please) of this amazing and stupendous empire, cannot get less than ten thousand solid ingots of silver by his office, year after year. My very fingers itch to be at 'em.

Upon reckoning up what I have said, like a fair accountant, I perceive, that our *independence* will stand us in about four millions *sterling* a year, at common charges, under the *Congress*, and at about double the sum under the *Lord Protector*, without running into the *extra* expenses of wars and other contingencies: but that, under the *old* government, it would cost us not a *thirteenth part* in the former case, and in the latter, not above a *six and twentieth*, omitting the *extra* expenses as before. But what signifies all this, or even the poverty and ruin of two or three generations to come, when we consider (as the Congress has done) that our *posterity* in the latest ages of the world may receive the benefit of it? Who deserves to live, that would not sacrifice himself, and all that he has, with his children and his children's children, in order that the great grand child of his great grandson, may be able to live like a gentleman? and besides,

sides, when we are in possession of *Spanish* America, who knows, but it may be in our power, one time or other, to reimburse ourselves? Who can tell, but it may lead to *universal Empire*?

There's honour and glory for you! This would be reviving the *GOLDEN* age in reality. Is not my scheme then better than that of the Congress, who once *talked* of "retiring backwards," and "enjoying the luxury of being "free" in the woods, and of eating hickory nuts and wild cherries like a parcel of squirrels? or, than those of our wise *fish-kill* gentlemen, who propose our going out of the world in a huff, that we may huzza *liberty and property* in Heaven? Dunces! Do they think noise and nonsense are to be heard there?—But mine is a good, sober, rational plan, founded upon *arithmetic*, which of all sciences is one of the most *certain*, and deals in gold and silver, which of all things upon the face of this earth, are the most *profitable*. I launch out for *empire* and *riches*. I hate to talk about Heaven above, while we are deposing kings and cutting peoples throats below; because the talking and the doing don't agree together: and I have a monstrous aversion to all *paper-trash*, because it had its origin from rags, (of which we have quite enough) and because I am sure it will never end in money.

Before I conclude, I could almost find in my heart to write a panegyric upon our grand and extensive empire, upon its innumerable riches and advantages, upon the most exalted dignity of our Lord Protector, or upon the matchless wisdom



wisdom of our most immaculate Congress—all inexhaustible subjects, and all worthy and declamatory *powers* of a *Cicero*, or the investigation even of him, who wrote — the memorable *Meditation upon a Broomstick*.—But here, I doubt, my genius would fail me: nor have I leisure, in our present bustle, to take account of flourishes and flowers. Such nose-gays, besides, may suit the young; but plain narrations of plain matters of fact accord better with the dry cold habit of age,

It will be the laudable employment, therefore, of an historian in some future period to recite our unparalleled adventures in the present; and though they may not create the diversion, afforded by the celebrated history of *Cervantes*, I dare say they will be thought to the full as marvellous, as well as abundantly more interesting. They will yield a new fund of political and commercial knowledge, as well as knowledge of mankind, to posterity, not to be acquired from any other history: which, if it either mend their manners or their understandings, will be the most valuable legacy we may possibly have to leave them.

I N T E G E R.

L E T.

## L E T T E R III.

**T**HE longer one lives in the world, the more reason one has to complain of the frail mutability of all things: And he is to be esteemed the wisest man, who can either preserve his fortunes from the common decay, or catch the most sunshine to make them flourish. Some degree of skill and merit on the one hand, or a competent portion of address and assurance on the other, are the best sails that can be spread for the stormy sea of life. As the world goes, a man might better want merit itself, than confidence. An imposing air, with a moderate share of worth, will succeed nine times out of ten; while a person (as a celebrated author observes) "who sets out in the world with real timidity and diffidence, has not an equal chance upon it: He will be discouraged, put by, or trampled on."

To apply this observation to my own case: I find, I am not likely to succeed in my application for the office of *acomptant general* to the grand American Empire. I perceive, I want a sufficient fund of impudence to carry my point through, and that my intended masters wish to have people about them, who would not

stumble at a moral impediment, but flounder  
 on through thick and thin, tell lies, and vow  
 they are truths, and many things of that sort,  
 which I don't feel myself qualified to do. I  
 wish to spend the few days yet allotted to my  
 age, in a little tranquillity, which would be im-  
 possible, if I were to follow the dictates of some  
 people I could name, instead of the dictates of  
 my own conscience. To make short of the  
 matter, I shall miss my employment, partly for  
 want of the assurance above mentioned, but  
 chiefly because the Congress wisely intend to  
 keep no accounts at all, and in the true spirit of  
 that charity which begins at home, wish to cover  
 all things of this trying nature with oblivion.  
 They will readily publish their *journals* and other  
*wordy* proceedings; because they are not only  
 convenient vehicles for political insinuation, but  
 standing ostensible documents of their autho-  
 rity: And *that* is a material point, which must  
 be kept constantly in view. Were they to deal  
 in *debtor* and *creditor*, they could not but state  
 for the public eye the numerous cargoes, and  
 chests of cash, which they have remitted to  
 Europe on their own account since the begin-  
 ning of these troubles, and thereby acknow-  
 ledge a more weighty balance against them,  
 than either their prudence or their inclination  
 can be supposed to allow. To talk of pur-  
 chasing *frigates* here and there to fight the King's  
 ships with, when no frigates are found and no  
 proof appears that they ever will be found, can  
 never answer in *accoupts*. Promises may amuse  
 the gaping multitude for a time; but it is vulgar  
 arithmetic that must satisfy them at the long-  
 E run:

run: and this our wise leaders as well as myself, who have been behind the curtain, and know pretty exactly the true state of our affairs, are sensible enough will be the issue; but we must protract the thing as long as we can, and "make our hay while the sun shines." The storm will be heavy enough at last: But what then?—We have taken care to provide a comfortable shelter for our own retreat.

Giving up, therefore, for the present, all thoughts of success in the *accounting* department, I intend (as I most cordially hate to be idle) to turn myself to some new employment, in which if I cannot be so beneficial to myself as in the other, I may at least be attempting something (to speak like a patriot) for the good of my country. While I was musing on what line I should pursue, I cast my eye upon a paper, which has had a pretty brisk circulation, entitled, "AN ADDRESS OF THE CONVENTION OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS." I read it over diligently and respectfully, as every patriot should the performance of a body of men, dignified with so pompous a title. But yet I will acknowledge, that there are so many *mysteries* and *obscurities* in the work, so many *ambiguities* and *allusions*, so many *sarcastisms* and *innuendos*, that I was very often at a loss to comprehend the *sense* or the *truth* of many important articles and informations. I could not help thinking therefore, that, to clear away this dust (which may possibly be thrown into some peoples eyes) the *text* of our respectable convention stood in great need of a *comment*; and that,



that, as I was likely to have some little time upon my hands, I might as well try what success I could meet with in the shape of an *expositor*. The thought gave me some hope of amusement at least; and accordingly, I will cheerfully set about it. If I have not quite so much learning and inspiration as my authors, I assure myself that I need not come behind them in integrity.

I shall begin with the *title*. My brethren of the *Fish-Kill* style their performance "an address of the *representatives* of the *state* of New York to *their constituents*." The authority we have to believe that these *good-men and true*, are the real *representatives* of the aforesaid *state*, is the testimony of our worthy *Abraham Ten Broeck*, President (as he subscribes himself) of the said *representatives*, dated at *Fish-Kill*, Dec. 23, 1776. To expound this aright, my reader must know, that this city of the *Fish-Kill* is the metropolis of the said *state* of New-York, and has been so ever since a nameless accident, which some people thought might prove fatal to health, drove the aforesaid *representatives* out of the old-seat of empire, upon the island of *Mannhattan*. The reader must also imagine, which is very possible with a small degree of invention, that the said *representatives* were *legally* chosen by the *free consent* of a great *majority* of the people, who attended at the election; and that the *representatives* of all the counties upon Long-Island, Staten-Island, York-Island, &c. were also present. The time and place of election, however, through some blunder or other, has never been rightly recorded, and it is no wonder

wonder therefore it should have slipped out of our memory. We have notwithstanding *Abraham Ten Broeck's* word for it, the president of this convention, and late sturgeon-monger; and that man deserves to be pickled like a sturgeon, who does not believe it, or rather to have his part in the several comminations and denunciations, which are found written in the book of the said convention. This book is called, an *Address to their constituents*, and is printed, I suppose, for the benefit of those who are *not* their constituents. And much good a right perusal of it may possibly do them; and for a just comprehension of the subject, it is my ambition to afford them a little assistance. I will endeavour to elucidate the difficult passages, clear the text of ambiguities, carefully attend to etymologies, offer new translations, and, in short, act the part of an upright commentator. Thus much by way of preface.

They set out by telling *their constituents*, that  
 “ the freedom and happiness, or the slavery and  
 “ misery, of the present and future generations  
 “ of Americans is to be determined on a solemn  
 “ appeal to the supreme ruler of all events.”—  
 It is right to begin with a transparent piece of piety. A *solemn appeal* is made to God Almighty. This solemn appeal, candid reader, does not mean *prayers*, as some silly people might think, but a good broad sword, a rifle-gun and bayonet, gun-powder taken from the King's stores, and some of his cannon, to knock his peoples brains out, or to run them through the body; *with which sacrifices God is*, undoubtedly, *well pleased*, when offered up by our  
 holy

holy appellants.—On this solemn appeal, which God is very likely to attend to, “the freedom and happiness of Americans *is* to be determined.” That is, gentle reader, the Americans have not been free and happy in times past; and, therefore, unless the order of things be totally inverted, under which they have heretofore been *miserable slaves*, they never shall be happy in times to come. All of us know, what wretches, what Israelites in bondage, we have hitherto been, till our good representatives above-mentioned undertook our deliverance. Nobody could possess his farm, or dispose of his merchandize; nobody lived either in peace or security; nobody could even say, that he had life or property; before we were under the direction of our Congresses, conventions, and watchful committees. All this, therefore, is a most divine truth, which our said patriotic and faithful convention, in great concern for our welfare, have set before us. Remember, Reader, and profit.

“You and all men were created free, and “authorized to establish civil government.” This is gospel [i. e. *good news*, from a Saxon word] for the blacks; not a black gospel. Negroes, being men, are *all free* among us, and as such are authorized to set up a government. We may therefore justly expect to have, in a little time, a black assembly, a black council, a black governor, and a black Common Wealth; so that we shall soon be “black and all black.” Such a constitution would shine like my shoe. There seems, however, a little blunder in the text, perhaps (as is often the case with manuscripts)

scripts) through the ignorance of the transcriber. Our learned convention certainly never meant to assert, that *all men* are or *were created*, because it is said in scripture, that only *one* was in that predicament; and midwives tell us, that people now a days are all *born*, without exception. The illiterate copyist certainly merits flagellation for mistaking the mode, in which such rogues as himself have appeared to trouble the world.

“ It is the duty of every man to oppose and  
 “ repel all those, by whatever name or title  
 “ distinguished [i. e. under whatever pretence]  
 “ who prostitute the powers of government to  
 “ destroy the happiness and freedom of the  
 “ people.” This is good and sound doctrine. Every honest man must approve it. They, therefore, who, though distinguished by any name or covered by any pretence, shall seize upon peoples properties merely because they differ in opinion from themselves, or shall drag them away from their families into prisons, or shall *exclude them* from their native country, where they had always been free, and where they wish to be quiet, are destroyers of the happiness and freedom of that people; and, as such, ought to be opposed and repelled. This is an explication of the doctrine: the Reader’s good sense will make a suitable application.

“ We should still have enjoyed the blessings  
 “ of peace and plenty, if we had not forgotten  
 “ the source from which those blessings flowed,  
 “ and permitted our country to be contaminated  
 “ by the many shameful vices, which have prevailed among us,” This sentence contains at once an instructive truth, and an humble confession



fession of sins. We cannot deny but we might *still have enjoyed* all our former blessings, if we had not forgotten *their* source, and *our own*. INGRATITUDE, to our shame be it spoken, has been one of our *vices*, of our *many* vices, of our *many shameful* vices. We have received continual favours and bounties, much protection and security, and might have received more, and been happy still, *if we had not forgotten* from whence they came, and *how freely* they came. We have not only *permitted* this vice of ingratitude, but *encouraged* it; for which reason, and as a proof of the sincerity of our repentance, we ought to turn from the evil of our ways.— This is the evident sense of our pious convention, in their holy care for the good of our souls. But this is not enough; for they immediately add,

“ It is a well-known truth, that no *virtuous* people *were ever* oppressed; and it is also true, that a *scourge was never wanting* to those of an opposite character.” All this is right; and if we had been but a *virtuous* and a *grateful* people in general, we should never have suffered the oppression of those, who have hunted us from place to place, have banished us to distant countries far from our homes, have confined us in misery and iron, and threatened our utter destruction, if we refused to join in their wicked ways. We should have resisted the first beginning of such *vicious* proceedings among us, and have prevented their *prevalence*, of which we so justly complain. Law and order would have had their wonted influence among us, and imparted the blessings of peace, but for this base conduct,

conduct, for which, as we have supported lately the *opposite character* above mentioned, we receive and are entitled to the *scourge* of poverty and war. We now feel this *scourge* for our ingratitude and other *shameful vices*; and I hope therefore we shall make a due improvement from this doctrine of our contrite convention.

"You were born equally free with the Jews."  
—I believe, it should have been, "equally free  
"with the blacks;" at least, it might have been  
as well the one as the other, since "all men" are  
free born.—"And have as good right to be  
"exempted from the *arbitrary domination* of  
"Britain, as they had from the invasions of  
"Egypt, Babylon, Syria, or Rome."—That is,  
America being parcel of the British empire, as  
Judea was *not* of the Egyptian or Babylonian,  
no Briton has a right to come into it; because  
the Egyptians or Babylonians could not lawfully  
come into Judea. Or perhaps it means, that the  
government of Britain is as *arbitrary* as those of  
Egypt or Babylon; which every body, that has  
read history, must know to be a certain truth. I  
take this last to be the genuine sense, and the  
better reading; because we have, ever since the  
plantation of these colonies, found the domina-  
tion of Britain extremely arbitrary indeed. We  
have been teased to death with her and her  
armies, fighting with French and Indians in our  
back-country, disturbing our good neighbour-  
hood by the conquest of Canada, removing the  
influence of our BEST FRIENDS (as Mr. *Crisis*  
calls the French and Spaniards) from Canada  
and Florida by the peace of 1763, filling our  
ports

ports with ships of various kinds, and troubling us to hoist her colours in foreign harbours under a pretence of security. We have had her *arbitrary* grants, her *arbitrary* bounties her *arbitrary* reimbursements, her *arbitrary* money, and a hundred more such arbitrary matters. In short, we were always as miserable as the poor Jews in Egypt under her arbitrary domination, and never yet tasted any happiness, plenty, or security, from her, or by her. She has always been as "cruel and implacable a tyrant" as Pharaoh. But what halcyon days we have now? How happy, how free, how contented, is every man among us, under the *tender* domination of our most tender convention at Fish-Kill? How mild and benign is the gracious influence of our admirable Congress? What are we not to expect from the *truth* and other virtues of our most wonderful Dictator? What security, what peace, what a flourishing and extensive commerce, do we enjoy, under our present most mild and settled government? Every man now sits under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, none making him afraid. Surely, the convention may believe that the *Millennium* itself, for their sakes, is most happily begun in America!—Let this, Reader, serve for your present meditation: we will pursue our exposition at another opportunity.

INTEGER:

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LET.

## L E T T E R IV.

**I** CONCLUDED my last letter by expounding the humble confession of sins, set forth by the meek and lowly convention at Fish-Kills, and their acknowledgement of the divine judgments which have followed them. I endeavoured to make (as good expositors do) a *practical* use of their doctrine, in order to impress it upon the minds of my readers. I shall pursue the same course in the present letter, and continue to do so to the end of the chapter.

By a pretty strong figure, not always allowed in sober prose, our convention have called the states of *Egypt, Babylon, Syria, and Rome* by the name of *Tyrants*. However it may be a blunder of the copiest, who fancied they were so many *persons* without christian names; and therefore, passing that by, I shall proceed in my notes and illustrations.

Speaking of the inhabitants of Britain, called in the text *our Enemies*, the convention say, that  
 “ they are of a nation and people bound to us  
 “ by the strongest ties. A people by whose  
 “ side we have fought and bled, whose power  
 “ we have contributed to raise, who owe much  
 “ of their wealth to our industry, and whose  
 “ grandeur



“ grandeur has been augmented by our exertions.” Gentle Reader, here is a great deal of matter in few words, which, as they are *positive*, and *consequently* true, deserve some consideration. The people of Britain “ were bound to us by “ the strongest ties.” I suppose our convention meant, by saying this, to give us a proof of their great *strength* in having burst those ties asunder. And as the connection was of so little worth to our peace and happiness, it may be fairly argued, they have great merit in doing it. So had Samson, when he pulled down the house upon the head of the Philistines : for, like our convention, perhaps, he did not think his own worth preserving.—“ A people by whose side we have fought “ and bled.”—I presume they do not mean, that *we* Americans went over to Europe to fight and bleed by the side of Britons, in order to protect them against, or to prevent an invasion from their enemies ; but rather that *they* came over hither at *our request*, when the French and Indians *invaded us*, and that *then* we generously stepped forth and fought “ by their side :” that is, sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other, as suited our interest best. This I take to be the genuine sense ; because we all know it to be a fact.—“ whose power we have contributed to raise.”—That is, Great Britain had no power till after she had drained herself of people, in order to strengthen us, that we might strengthen her. She was scarce known among the nations, till she had settled the Massachusetts colony in the time of Charles the first ; and through all the succeeding reigns, till she had expended above SEVENTY MILLIONS at least in

wars upon our account, and above FORTY MILLIONS in bounties and establishments here, her power cannot be supposed to have been raised. We, by shewing her the way to all this expence, have vastly increased her strength and augmented her opulence. If Great Britain had two or three more such helpers, she would be Great Britain indeed.—“ Who owe much of “ their wealth to our industry.”—That is, they have been so lazy at home, that in order to procure *them* wealth, *we* have generously made unusual exertions of industry. *They* owe wealth to *us*; *we* are not, *we* cannot be in the nature of things, *we* never were in fact, indebted to *them*. Our names are not in *their* books, but *they* owe to *our* people immense sums for goods exported hence, for which they are so base, and so dishonest as to refuse to account. Sad rogues indeed!—“ And whose grandeur has been augmented by our exertions.”—*We* have paid her armies and her fleets; *we* have maintained her ambassadors abroad and her numerous establishments at home; *we* have carried forth her trade to all parts of the habitable world; and under *our* banners, and by *our* exertions, is she arrived at her present grandeur. For centuries past, we have been her support; and, to prove the greatness of our power, what we have hitherto supported, we now mean to destroy. This is a plain paraphrase of the above words of our convention, which in themselves are *hard to be understood*, and the sentiments of which I believe (in the language of scripture) *many have wrested to their own destruction*.

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The next passage seems as difficult. After praising the happiness of the times, which we have passed under British government, and that perfect security we have hitherto enjoyed; the convention assure us, "That the people of Britain never claimed a right to dispose of *us*, and every thing belonging to *us*, according to their will and pleasure, until the reign of the present king of that island. And that to enforce *this* abominable claim, they have invaded *our* country by sea and by land. From this extravagant and iniquitous claim, and from the unreasonable as well as cruel manner, in which they would gain our submission, it seems as though Providence were determined to use them as instruments to *punish the guilt of this country, and bring us back to a sense of duty* to our Creator." In order to understand this right, gentle Reader, you must understand the *cause*, the *end*, and the *means*, which our right godly convention have, in the overflowings of their zeal for our welfare, here laid down before us. The *cause* assigned is Providence: the *end* intended is punishment of our sins (which we have before considered) and a renovation of our minds, which have lost *all sense of duty*. In order to induce this sense, so callous are our feelings, Providence is represented as using, for *means*, a most *abominable, extravagant, and iniquitous claim*, which Providence, therefore, must haused the people of Britain to set up for this purpose of our punishment. But, after all, what is this claim? Why, that America for whom so much expence has arisen to Great Britain, and for whose protection great

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sums have been constantly expended by her, should contribute a certain *proportion* to the *general defence of the empire*. This is abominable enough. We therefore refuse to pay it. We will be protected for *nothing*, and share in all the advantages of British subjects besides. The king and people of "that island" (this contemptuous word is used to distinguish our *vast continent*) think this argument unreasonable, and insist upon our contribution. We still refuse, and in consequence (according to our convention) they *invade our country by sea and by land*. We strive to butcher their soldiers, and they are so *unreasonable*—and *cruel* as to fight again.—But still I do not know what to make of our convention, when they throw the whole blame of the matter, as they do in fact, upon ourselves. They tell us, that all these extraordinary combustions were occasioned by *the guilt of this country*, and are intended to operate as so many *punishments* on account of it. In this view, *we* are the people to be blamed, not the people of Britain: *we* are the folks, who are to feel the rod, not the English: *we* have lost the *sense of duty to our Creator* rather than our mother country, whom our convention here actually represent as the instrument of Providence only to *bring us back* to it. Of course, all this impiety, bloodshed, animosity, and evil of war, are to be imputed to *ourselves*. We need not go abroad for the causes of these misfortunes: they all originate at home, and spring from our own evil councils, and our own *guilty* conduct.—This certainly must be the genuine meaning of our convention, because both sense and fact confirm it.



it. To read it otherwise, would be admitting that our godly representatives could publicly proceed with the most impudent falsehood and hypocrisy before God and man; which from such gentle sincere creatures cannot even be presumed. The reader will, therefore, take the matter in *this* way; and then the text is pretty clear of all ambiguity.

We are next called upon to remember, that, to obtain a redress of our grievances, *dutiful*, the *most dutiful*, and (what is more) *the humblest of all petitions* were presented.—It is rather too hard, by the bye, to call upon *all* of us to *remember*; for we have, generally speaking, very bad memories, which (as we have been taught to confess) do not *retain* proper impressions of gratitude, or any *sense of duty*. I own, Reader, that I for one do not recollect any most dutiful or most humble petitions; but I have somewhat of a faint remembrance of a petition or two so called, which we sent home, and, at the same time, with something like an address to the people of Ireland, inviting them to take up arms against their king in our behalf. I remember too, that I said upon the occasion, that the petition, having this address connected with it, was no more dutiful or humble, than the taking a man by one hand, and driving a blow at his head with other, would be handsome or civil. But, thank God, *we* patriots are such favourites of heaven, that all things are profitable to us, even our very sins; while all the actions of our enemies, however right they may seem in some mens eyes, are intended, not for their own good, but for ours only. This is comfortable doctrine

doctrine for *us*; for, let the wind blow from which point it may, we are sure of getting safe into harbour.

“ Being bound by the *strongest obligations* to “ defend the inheritance which God hath given “ *us*.”——Does any man doubt, whether God hath given us this land? We may refer him to our convention at the Fish-Kills (if they are not removed from thence) or rather to the council at Boston, for the deed of gift or conveyance, signed, sealed and executed; for both these parties profess to have it among them. I own, I have never seen this curiosity; and when I have asked for it, they have constantly shewn me an old *Royal Charter* granted by a king of this world, or have talked to me in such a strain of metaphysical abstruseness, as my poor head cannot remember.—However, it is a scripture phrase, used by the ancient people of God; and, as we are his modern people, this phrase, as well as the inheritance, descends to us of right. We are at present the people of Israel; and when we crossed over the Atlantic, which I am sure is a greater stretch than through or over the Red Sea, we began to expel, not the Canaanites and the Hittites indeed, but men far worse than they. We cut the throats of the Indians, for trespassing upon our holy land. They pleaded indeed the right of nature and their inheritance from time immemorial; but we shewed them, according to the phrase of our convention, that it was an “ inheritance which “ God had given *us* ;” that they had been all the while only thievish usurpers; and that they might think it a matter of great grace, that we suffered

suffered them to enjoy it so long. When they did not understand this divine logic, we only turned them out of this world into another, *because* they did not understand it. We backed our arguments with proof, like thorough Polemics, and gave them the *last* reason as well as the first; and therefore all our conduct must needs be reasonable from beginning to end.—What reader can be so dull as not to see the strength and justice of our divine claim to this country? We came out of the modern house of bondage, Great Britain, we travelled from beyond the great sea, we ousted the inhabitants of the wilderness; and *who then is lord over us?* We never received any thing from Great Britain (though we might rightly have plundered her, as the Jews did the Egyptians) but the power of making laws, together with people, and money, and protection, and a few trifles of that kind; and for these we always made her a full satisfaction by our most florid professions of attachment and regard. This was a sufficient return for us to make, who had the *jus divinum* of all things on our side, which nobody has the authority to explain but the elders of Boston, or their deputies in our religious convention. As an instance of our power in this respect, you must know, gentle reader, that all the commands of God himself, though *positive* to the rest of the world, are only *conditional* at most to us. Thus, when God says, *Thou shalt do no murder*; applied to the world, the commandment means, “Thou shalt do no murder—to the men of Boston;” but when it refers to each of us and to our con-

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duct, it is to be read, "Thou shalt do no murder—unless it please *thee*." In *our* practice, killing is *no* murder; but in the practice of all other men towards us, their very thought to kill, is murder itself in the abstract. This is the difference between divine and human right, which if *Puffendorff* had but justly comprehended, he would have given quite a new turn to his idle book, *De Officio Hominis et Civis*. Give *us* the commandments, with the aforesaid suspending clause, empowering us *ad libitum* to break them; and I will prove, that we are not only the best civilians but the most religious people in the world. For what is a text without an interpretation, or rather without *our own* interpretation; or what is a law good for indeed, unless we can make it, and break it, and make it again, like the wise men of Connecticut, for ourselves?—This is good *common sense*, Reader, of the newest edition, and after the plan of that most charming and convincing performance so called, lately published by a very honest man at Philadelphia; to whom for the most modern improvements upon the Christian religion and politics, I must at present refer you.

"By our vigorous efforts, and by the goodness of divine Providence, those cruel invaders were driven from our country in the last campaign."—The dunce of a copyist has placed Providence *last*, as though it acted in subordination to our vigor, which the pious convention could not mean. *Ego et Rex meus* did not become even Cardinal Wolsey. However, Reader, here



here is one comfort for us; we and Providence (if it must be so) are allied again, notwithstanding our sins. But this alliance seems not very binding, for our convention presently complain again, that we and Providence (pardon the expression) did the business only *by balves*; the enemies are returned, because—"Peace we had not yet *deserved*"; for "we ascribed that to our own prowess, which was *only* to be attributed to the great Guardian of the innocent." Here is another difficulty which puzzles me. I cannot for my life, comprehend, how God, who is here styled the Guardian of the *innocent*, can have any thing to do with us, or with any propriety can be called *our* Guardian; when we have just before acknowledged ourselves *guilty* of "many shameful vices;" and *so* guilty; as instead of "deserving peace," to merit the scourge of heaven. I will not rank this among the *dubia evangelica*, though there is so much about divinity in it: I will rather leave it to my Reader to think of some name.

The next paragraph expresses great heat against all *pardon*. I was almost fool enough at first to think, from our grievous and penitent confession of sin and guilt, that *pardons* were the very things we wanted; and that as *innocent* people have nothing to do with them, such *guilty* folks as ourselves could never be safe without them. However, as it was only a flourish by the way; by the way, let it pass: a comment upon reason or fact cannot lay hold of it.

By way of conclusion to this letter, I must own, that I find this business of *expositing* but dry work, through the queerness of my materials; but, however, I will put on my spectacles again in a day or two, and rub through the matter as well as I can.

INTEGER.

LET-

## L E T T E R V.

**I** Finished my last letter with a comment upon the sublime panegyric, which our convention have given us, upon their own guilt and enormity. This, although it be matter of fact, is no matter of *faith*; because faith deals in things *unseen*, and these vices, our good men have been treating of, are evident enough. However, we must take things in this crooked world, as we find them; and so I take up again the good book of our convention.

For the comfort of my Reader, much of the excellent text from the Fish-Kill may be omitted; because it only respects the same things in different words. Their golden thoughts are duc-rile as gold itself, and can be spun out to the same degree of tenuity. I have heard, that a piece of that precious metal, about the size of a *Johannes*, might be extended to cover a common: I am sure every single conception of our worthies is abundantly more capable of extension, for it can spread over a continent. But, as to the *value* of our thoughts, leaf gold, or burnt silk itself, must certainly yield in the comparison. And, with respect to their lustre and brightness, I can boldly say, they shine like the moon in the meridian. If I had any faith in  
judicial

judicial astrology, or in the determinations of planetary influence, I should aver, that many of our ideas were so lofty and so supramundane, that they must have been under the immediate direction of that wonderful orb, and would consequently prove, that Bp. *Wilkins's* notion of communicating with it by means of a flying machine, was not quite so visionary, as some grovelling dolts, some mere *terræ-filii*, would represent it to be.

“ If a *reasonable* peace was intended, Why  
 “ did not the King empower his commissioners  
 “ to treat with the Congress, or with deputies  
 “ from all the assemblies? Or why was not  
 “ some other mode devised, in which America  
 “ might be heard?”—This is really charming. We all knew what was in the King’s commission, and understand it as perfectly as the commissioners themselves; or at least they should have given us an exact copy of that and other papers about them, if we do not understand it, as all ambassadors and treaty-mongers do upon like occasions. Who ever heard of a Minister Plenipotentiary, that will not publish his commission and ultimate instructions to all the world? And are we to have people come over, on purpose to talk and to treat with us; and yet not tell us beforehand, all that they mean to talk about? The truth is, we wanted “ no mode of  
 “ reconciliation,” which would not stipulate as a preliminary, that we are *independent* States, which is the great drift of our contention. We knew, that no mode of reconciliation, that the commissioners could bring, or Great-Britain adopt, could possibly square with that resolution. We  
 4 never



never had the matter really in view, because in such an event, we must have sunk the consequence of our Congress into the legal government of a free constitution, which they would not have endured. We pretended other things indeed; but indeed because it was not quite safe to let the public at once into our real design. And, therefore, if it had not been through fear of an insurrection at Philadelphia, our divine Congress would have taken no notice of the commissioners at all; but when they were in a manner compelled to do it, they very properly sent three men, who they knew would treat about nothing to the purpose with them. "We *knew* the men, whom we trusted." This was wise, and shewed how much we really cared for peace. If peace had been our wish, we ourselves "should have devised some mode" of treating with men, who came so far for that very purpose. But the characters of these commissioners were not the characters we wanted. They would have read us lectures on moderation, reconciliation, and unity, and if their ideas had succeeded, the country would have returned to its former situation, and of course many of our leaders would have had nothing to do. Our favourite notion of republicanism, which turns cobblers into kings, and gentlemen into pedlars, must in that case have been thrown aside: And we should now have wanted the benefit of our armies, and been plagued with an open trade. We should have lost the wonderful and certain advantage that "*the United States of America* are to sound *as pompously* "in the world or in history, as *the kingdom of* "*Great-*

“ *Great-Britain* ;” and that “ the character of  
 “ General *Washington* will fill a page with as  
 “ much lustre, as that of Lord *Howe*.” These  
 are points, we ought every one of us to die  
 rather than not obtain. Millions of sums, and  
 millions of lives, are but an inconsiderable sa-  
 crifice for these important purposes. Here is a  
 glory, which counterbalances all the worth of  
 commerce, the peace of an empire, or the hap-  
 piness of a world. Here is a prospect, which  
 must kindle an ardor of emulation in the most  
 languid breast, and for the attainment of which  
 famine, desolation and the sword, the battle of  
 of brother with brother, and all the savage scenes  
 of horror and death, and “ nothing, less than  
 nothing, and vanity.”

“ What faith, what trust, what confidence,  
 “ can you repose in those men, who are deaf  
 “ to the calls of humanity, dead to every sen-  
 “ timent of religion, and void of all regard  
 “ for the temples of the Lord of Hosts ?”  
 It is not easy rightly to expound this climax of  
 our most religious convention. Not that the  
 difficulty lies in the words, for they are tole-  
 rably plain, but in the sense and the matter.  
 If there are men in the world deaf to humanity  
 and dead to religion, I can presently assure my  
 Reader, that I should not readily trust them. But  
 that there are none such (at least among our-  
 selves) is very plain from the cessation of our  
 troubles. We have never seen husbands torn  
 from their wives, children from their parents,  
 and parents from their children, without con-  
 sulting either their interest or inclinations, for  
 the express purpose of fighting against the King.  
 And

And as to the King's commissioners, who came out with the avowed design, and in consequence of our own desire, to reconcile all disputes, they have been so "deaf to the calls of humanity," that they have never made us one overture of peace, never issued any humane declaration or proclamation, never courted us to return and enjoy liberty and property upon the principles of that constitution we once called *happy*; but are in themselves so irreligious, as never to pray in the corners of the streets as we do, on purpose to shew the world, that they do pray. Besides, our holy convention has the ancient miraculous gift of *discerning the spirits*, and therefore it is no wonder, that they pronounce so roundly of every man's spiritual state and condition. And as to "regard for the *temples of the Lord of Hosts*," I have heard of some people, who have prostituted these very holy places to sedition and schism, and profaned their *adyta* or *sancta sanctorum*, by using them against the Lord of Hosts himself. I dare say, that our good convention would think them less defiled, by being turned into bog-houses, than into conventicles of treason against the King and our ancient constitution.—But, after all, instead of accusing other people of being "dead to every sentiment of religion," I should have thought, that such a character rather belonged to those, who have confessed their "contamination by many shameful vices," and their "loss of a sense of duty to their Creator." I should have believed, that *these* were the people, who fall under our stigma of being dead to religion; unless our convention

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have

have really discovered the holy art of uniting vice and religion, or with the profession of religion. It is said by some, that they have actually made this convenient discovery: if so, God forbid, that I should rob any men of the merit of their inventions. Let them have all the honour of it for me: I am quite content with a little common sense of the *old sort*, and a little common honesty to carry me on through the world.

“ And why all this dissolation, bloodshed, “ and unparalleled cruelty ?” Ah, why indeed ? I can see no reason for it but the unparalleled obstinacy, ambition, and roguery of certain men. It is a very good question for our convention to ask themselves every morning before breakfast, and every night before they go to bed. They should ventilate this matter constantly and seriously. *Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.* They would find the answer to be (for I have well considered the weight of the words) exactly what I have just now given.

“ But you are told—that your opposition is “ vain, your resistance fruitless. What then ? “ You can but be slaves at last, if you should “ think life worth holding on so base a tenure.” —This is excellent! To speak like a commentator, this is the favorite *ελεγχος* of our favorite argument. We can *die*. And what then ? Why then, we shall be *dead*; and *that's all*. How glorious!—We may beggar our families, fill our hearts with misery and our country with blood, and when we have done all this, and done it in vain, we may either be slaves, or die; just which we please. What a prospect of happiness ?



pinels?—I suppose, Reader, that our convention means by setting before us the end of these things, that we should begin to reclaim ourselves, and turn from our errors: and, indeed, it is high time, if we would have any thing left upon earth worth living for.

Our good convention go on complaining and exulting, confessing their sins and triumphing over their enemies, and, as good men should, *all in a breath*. This shews, they are capable of great things, by doing so many at once. They can talk down the Almighty from Heaven “to their alliance,” and by his “merciful” assistance, curse their King, and cut the throats of their neighbours, who differ from them in opinion. In short, they can treat their maker in such a style of familiarity, as though they had never committed one sin against him, or had been as intimately acquainted with him, as with *John Trott* their next door neighbour. All this shews the courage, and magnanimity of republicanism, which, in a manner, can bring down God himself to a *level* with man, and obliterate all the distinctions of sense and folly, virtue and vice, wealth and poverty, throughout the creation. By all these circumstances, Reader, you may know how perfectly well qualified the grand convention of the Fish-Kill are to take care of our fortunes, our manners, and lives.

They give us line upon line, and precept upon precept, out of mere charity, I suppose, for our welfare. It would be doing them injustice to omit their most pious exhortations to their constituents. “Let a general reformation of manners take place. Let no more widows and

“ orphans, compelled to fly from their peaceful  
 “ abodes, complain that you make a market of  
 “ their distress, and take *cruel* advantage of their  
 “ necessities.”—This is at once an acknowledgement of very *shameful* guilt indeed, and an intimation of duty. The one includes our *past* conduct; the other relates to our *future*. I hope we shall receive profit and instruction from both. No people want a *general reformation* more than ourselves. This was so obvious, that our very convention could not help pointing it out to us: we all know that the Congress and its adherents, our convention, &c. have *compelled widows and orphans*, as well as whole families together, *to fly from their peaceful abodes*; and it is a *singular* instance of their truth, that they should so roundly confess it. We are perfectly sensible, *what market is made of their distress*, and *what cruel advantage is taken of their necessities*. The groans, the tears, the piteous complaints, of numberless widows and orphans, all confirm the melancholy fact; all acknowledge the origin of their miseries to have been in our leaders; all confess, as with one voice, that those leaders have created, as well as drawn, these scenes of woe, and implore “ a  
 “ reformation of their manners,” that they may at least perceive a hope for an end of their sorrows. But I will paraphrase no farther here upon this most just acknowledgement of infamy, lest, if we run on expatiating upon our own guilt, the whole world may take us *ex confesso* for devils incarnate. This is a point we none of us desire; for, though paradox it may seem to ordinary understandings, we only confess all  
 these

these sins, on purpose that we may be thought holy. And if *we* are not an extraordinary sort of people with all these perfections about us, who, in the name of wonder, can be?

*We* are next admonished to court the favour of heaven; and, in order to induce us more fervently "to rely upon God," those good christians the *Romans* under *Fabius* (long before the time of Christ) are proposed by our convention for an example. Indeed, it must be owned, we are very much like them. The only difference is, that as they were "confident in their own virtue, and in the protection of heaven;" we are, "conscious of many shameful vices prevailing among us," and that "our Maker is displeased with us." Of course, the Reader may judge, which can better claim the title of Christians, *they* or *we*. This is the most profitable inference, which I know how to draw from the comparison.

From the above "Mysteries of Godliness," our amiable convention descend to plain matters of fact. They tell us, in so many words, that "a powerful and well-disciplined army, supported by a respectable fleet, *invade* this country: they are *opposed* by an army, which though numerous and brave [*brave* as Romans, if not quite so *pious*] is quite undisciplined. Notwithstanding this manifest disparity, they have never thought it *prudent* to give us battle, though they have *OFTEN* had the *fairest opportunities*."—This text, Reader, is embarrassed with many difficulties, which people of mere common sense, who have not been behind the curtain, could not easily solve;

solve; and, therefore, I, who know all the motives and meanings of our deeply intelligent convention, shall endeavour to explain them. In the first place, we are *invaded* by the British forces. Now, to *invade* is to make a descent upon and *attack* a country or place in possession of another army or people, whose business it is, if the invasion be unjust, to repel them. Accordingly we *opposed* these British forces *by an army quite undisciplined*; but still notwithstanding all this opposition, there was *no battle*. And our convention presently give us, in a sentence or two after the above quotation, the *true reason*. "Would it not be highly imprudent (they ask) "to *risque* such important events [*i. e.* the "freedom and happiness of millions yet unborn] upon the *issue of a general battle*?" It appears then, that the cause of all this backwardness was from ourselves, because *we* would not run the *risque* of a battle: *we* thought it *imprudent*, whatever thoughts might possess the Britons. *We* had too much at stake to run such a hazard. *We* loved our homes, *we* loved our lives. We remembered the observation of one of our famous ancestors of blessed memory:

*The man that fights and runs away,  
May live to fight another day;  
But he, that is in battle slain,  
Shall never rise to fight again.*

And we acted accordingly. There was, therefore, *no battle* at all: our *brave* soldiers, were wise soldiers, and, notwithstanding their *numbers* and *bravery*, would not venture to stand any  
ugly



ugly chances. The Britons too “ *never thought it prudent* (for even those fools are wise sometimes) *to give us battle.*” They did not invade and attack us upon *Long Island*. Poor wretches! They had come from a far country, and of course wanted a few vegetables for the scurvy; and so, out of mere compassion and complaisance, we left them all the works and cannon, with which we had engaged ourselves during the summer, for their exercise and amusement. This was only *civility*: there was no ill-natured fighting in the case.—And when those “poor cowardly souls,” longing for some houses to cover them during the winter, had *the fairest opportunity of giving us battle* on York Island, if they had chosen it; we did but politely withdraw, from tenderness to their wants. When they *invaded* the county of West Chester, and had the fatigue of travelling miles after miles up to the White Plains, we gave them the *fairest opportunity* of fighting us, by getting thither before them and keeping entirely out of their way. We kept the field as long as we chose it; and what proud victor could do more? When they “cruelly invaded” Fort Washington, *in patience we possessed our souls* like good christians, and meekly surrendered up the fort and ourselves to their desire. Of course, here was no battle, though a very fair opportunity of *giving* one. And such opportunities have *often* occurred. No, Reader, in all these situations we have been something *more* than conquerors: we made the Britons *run*,—though indeed it was *after us*; and we *out run* them too, and consequently we *out did* them; and if we *out did* them, we  
beat

*beat* them, by the fairest deduction that logic affords us.

A victory, without a *triumph*, was thought of but little consequence by the Romans; those good christians whom our convention propose for our example. In imitation therefore of so respectable a nation, it is proper, that we should triumph too. But, as all things are capable of improvement, we are to mend the matter by triumphing *before* the victory, and not merely *after* it, as they did. The thing itself is one and the same; the difference is only in the time. "We have more *fighting* men in America than Britain can possibly send. Our trade is *free*, and every port of France and Spain affords protection to our ships. Other nations, invited by the advantages of our commerce, will *doubtless* soon follow their example; and experience must convince the most incredulous, that the British navy cannot *exclude* us from the sea." To understand this triumphantly difficult text aright, candid Reader, you must consider that all the men in America are *fighting men*, that they have nothing else to do but to fight, and that they had rather fight than eat their breakfasts. In the next place, you are to know, that all these fighting men are unanimous and can be gathered into one place in a very few days, that every soul of them is willing to leave his farm and his family for that purpose, and that their negroes will be just as obedient and industrious without them as with them. The state of affairs in the last juncture proves all this; for we had not an Englishman or an Irishman in our whole army—they were all  
our

our own people. And with respect to our numbers, I need only say, that if we could afford to put *thirty thousand* men and more under the turf in the last year, we shall be able to put *fifty thousand* under it in the present; because we find men much more hearty for the service, and better fed and cloathed than they have been. Besides, all these men when they are at the camp have nothing else to do, at times, but to *increase and multiply*, from whence we may conclude that our population goes on most amazingly. Our trade likewise is perfectly *free*; for it is out of all duty on the one hand, and on the other, there are no ships of war from the enemy able or ready to molest it. We never had such a thriving commerce as we have at present, nor such profitable returns made us. We send out our produce, and we get in return powder and shot, which we bounce upon the British soldiers quite delightfully. We are grown so rich by this lucrative trade, that our Congress has been obliged, for want of room in this country, to lay up a magazine of treasure in France, where they intend hereafter to visit it, and all for our sakes, most assuredly. There can be no doubt, because our convention says it is *doubtless*, that all the world will court our *free trade*, without any regard to the interference or resistance of Britain. We are such excellent paymasters, and foreign laws have so strong an operation among us for the recovery of debts, that to be sure, they will spend their last dollar in order to obtain our friendship, and especially as we mean that our friendship shall be entirely profitable to *them*, without the least consideration of *our-*

*selves.* And as to *excluding us from the sea*, how ridiculous is the idea; when every body knows, that our land *touches* it for above 1600 miles together; and that all the force in the world cannot carry that land away from it!—This, Reader, I take to be the true interpretation of this most extraordinary passage, which, for the truths therein contained, as well as for the manner of relating them, is worthy the observation and the admiration of all men.

“ The wise and virtuous (say our convention) “ of *all* nations *have pronounced* our cause to be “ just, and *approved* the manner in which our “ resistance hath been conducted.”—Upon my word, our patriots have a much wider correspondence than I could have believed, but for this authority. All the wise and virtuous people of all kindreds and nations, and tongues, have sent our Congress, or our convention, congratulatory letters upon their manifold glories and triumphs. I should like to know, whom they employed to read these letters, how they were conveyed hither, and where they are deposited. It would amuse me much to see such a polyglot of compliments bound up in calf together. But there is one thing in our text which embarrasses me. Our pious convention, in a few pages above, have been confessing their sins before God and the world, and perhaps *all* the world, and have owned that “ our country is contaminated by many *shameful vices.*” Now, I wish to know, for which of these vices, the wise and virtuous of all nations have sent us their approbations.—There is also another difficulty. Most of the states of this world are *monarchies.*



*monarchies*. I cannot learn, which of those monarchies, or what people under them, have ventured to send us an opinion in favour of *republicanism*, or how they should be so much out of humor on a sudden with their own form of government, as to approve our's.—There yet remains another embarrassment, and that is the post, or packet, of conveyance. We have declared for *independance* but very little more than half a year ago, and a passage alone to the “wise and virtuous of all nations,” both by land and water, would require twice that time. Of course then, I am astonished, how we have come at the intelligence, that all these wise and virtuous folks have *pronounced* “our cause to be just,” or by what vehicle, by what *pacolet* of a messenger, they have signified this wonderful approbation to us.—But perhaps miracles have not ceased: And I have no other refuge in this matter, but either to call it a miracle, which you know is not to be accounted for, or to term it a mystery, and so consign it over to the professors of occult philosophy. This I do very willingly, and am not ashamed to confess my incapacity to settle this lemma.

It is high time to conclude this letter; and therefore I will only observe for the present, that, such is the comfortable ingenuity of our convention, defeat, famine, and all other misfortunes, are only “blessings in disguise” (as the author of common sense says) and every loss amounts to a gain. The blessings indeed are so disguised on our part, that my poor weak eyes cannot possibly see them. I must borrow the microscope of the Congress; for I take

them to be rather small, and as capable of being brought into compass, as the innumerable multitude of beings, which *Lewenboeck* discovered in a single drop of water. However as the said encouraging author assures us) "if we get *but bread* to eat, and *any kind* of raiment to put on, we ought, not only to be contented, but thankful. *More than that* we ought not to look for." But he and I know better how to cater for *ourselves*. "Man cannot live by bread alone" (says the scripture); and I am so satisfied with that truth, that I never mean to try it. And as to the *any kind* of raiment, I do not know what to say to wearing nothing but blankets and bears skins, not I. I am afraid, I should be tempted to commence *rifle-man* indeed, and, like a member of that respectable body, rob and rifle the country, which, as yet, I do not feel bold enough or wicked enough to do. At least, I beg time to consider of it, and so for the present, adieu.

I N T E G E R.

L E T.

## L E T T E R VI.

MY last letter was concluded with a short dissertation upon *bread and water*, and upon the contentment which the author of the *Crisis* recommends to us in the enjoyment of this *alone*. He has told us, for our comfort, "more than *that* we ought not to look for." I have since been thinking, whether this writer (being, to my knowledge, what is vulgarly called a *sad dog*) had not a mind to sneer at us by this recommendation. You know, we have had a lamentable confession of sins published by our convention, and such an acknowledgement of *shameful vices*, as might very well qualify us to a place in some public endowments, which are famed for that sort of fare, by way of cure to vicious habits and inclinations. Now, this sly rogue by telling us, that we ought to *look for nothing more* than bread and water, certainly meant, that we *deserve* nothing more, and that bridewell and beggar's fare ought to be the portion of many of us. I heartily subscribe to this opinion, so far as relates to himself, and wish him very sincerely to enjoy these comforts in his own dear person; but, as to my own part, good Reader, roast beef and  
↓ plumb

plumb pudding are diet quite bad enough for me: I shall be contented if I have nothing worse to treat my grand-children with when they come to see me, or a good old friend, who wishes to smoke a pipe and talk over the affairs of our youth. I do not understand "repasts of air," which this *bag of prate* preaches about, not I: I am no cameleon, and shall never "repine," if I have good victuals and drink for myself and my friends, aye, and good cloathing too to cover my bones in my old age. All these *self-denying* schemes and *self-denying* ordinances smell so rank of Oliverian hypocrisy or political enthusiasm, that I could wish the authors of them either a straight waistcoat to repress the sallies of madness, or straight stocks to keep them within bounds and prevent their doing mischief.—But I must return to my comment upon the pious acts and publications of our convention.

They go on triumphantly, and reason thus with their constituents. "Whoever considers  
 " the natural strength and advantages of this  
 " country—and the *feeble* and *destitute* condition  
 " of Britain; that she is *drained* of men and of  
 " money; obliged to hire foreign mercenaries  
 " for the execution of her wicked purposes; in  
 " *arrears to her troops for a twelve-month's pay*,  
 " which she *cannot* or *will not discharge*; her  
 " credit sunk; her trade ruined; her inhabitants divided; her king unpopular, and  
 " her ministers execrated; that she is overwhelmed with a monstrous debt; cut off  
 " from the vast revenue heretofore obtained  
 " by taxes on American produce; her West  
 " India



" India islands in a starving condition ; her  
 " ships taken ; her merchants involved in bank-  
 " ruptcy ; &c. &c. &c." This is a most pro-  
 lix and most dismal text indeed. It is a perfect  
 assemblage of national misery and horror, the  
 picture of a dreadful storm, coloured with all  
 the savage wildness of a *salvator rosa*. Alas,  
 poor Britain ! How is the mighty fallen ? In  
 comparison of the " natural strength and ad-  
 " vantages of this country," how " feeble and  
 " destitute is thy condition ?"—If America  
 had not assisted Britain in the last war ; if she  
 had not, with her great resources and supe-  
 rior advantages, stepped in to the aid of " that  
 " island ;" or if she had made any *delays* or  
*hesitations* in the *succours* ; all would have been  
 lost, and the fourscore millions of that king-  
 dom had been spent in vain.—" She is *drained*  
 " of men and of money." But it was beside  
 the purpose of our convention to mention *the*  
 drain. Be that my task, as their faithful expo-  
 sitor. This continent derived its first, and the  
 far greater part of its present inhabitants from  
 the British islands. The settlement of America  
 was concerted and effected by people from  
 thence : And after they came hither, they in-  
 vited and influenced many others to follow them.  
 It was a new thing ; and its novelty, like the  
 novelty of the croisade, took with great num-  
 bers. Every age has its adventurers ; and, as  
 the great bulk of mankind must be compara-  
 tively poor and laborious, or if they are idle  
 be infallibly necessitous, the sudden acquisition  
 of riches, or an easy mode of subsistence, will  
 always induce a spirit, if not " the full soul  
 " of

“ of enterprize.” Perhaps, no nation is more famous for this spirit, than the nation from which we sprung. Britain, not satisfied with the commercial advantages she enjoyed to the days of *Cromwell*, though greater than those of any nation in Europe, must needs enter into a sort of *commercial gambling*. This *drained* her of many subjects, whose loss to her, both in what they would have *manufactured*, and in what they would have *consumed*, may be termed a SINK, in every sense of the word. The *drain* of MEN has been enormous: and what has been the consequence?—Our convention tell us; Britain is drained of MONEY too. If this be true, we Americans have been of immense advantage indeed to the mother-country: She is exceedingly obliged to us for all our favours; and particularly for the millions upon millions which the two last wars, wisely undertaken for our sakes, *drained* away from her.—Yet, drained as she is of money, our convention assure us in the next words, that she “ is obliged to *hire* “ foreign mercenaries.” I hardly know how to explain this difficulty. It is to be presumed, that they are not hired *without* money: and yet, if our Gentlemen may be credited, they certainly must; for Great Britain, according to them, is quite *drained* of her’s. I know of but one expedient for her in this case; and that is, to follow our example, by hiring troops with *paper dollars*, which can never be paid. These would make the Hessians smile; and much after the manner of a celebrated personage in *Milton*. Perhaps too, they would endeavour to pass them off upon *us* Americans; and God knows, that,

that, notwithstanding all "our natural advantages," we have a mighty many of our own already.—The convention, however, not content with bare assertion, give us, like substantial authors, a proof of the poverty of Britain. "She is in arrears to her troops for a TWELVE-MONTH'S PAY, which she *cannot* or *will not* discharge." Upon my word, she employs a *rich* set of soldiers, who can afford to trust her exchequer or her pay-office for a twelvemonth together; or soldiers so fond of the quarrel, that they *will* fight, though she *cannot* pay them; or, at least, stupid soldiers, who continue warm in her service, though she is beyond example so dishonest, that she *will not* discharge their arrears. But, after all, as an American patriot of the first water, I must be sorry to hear, from incontrovertible authority, that all the British soldiers in America *are regularly paid*, not in *paper*, but in *silver dollars*; that they offer no complaints upon this head; and that they are contented with every thing, but—with us and with their own winter quarters. These last, I hear, they wish to leave, poor fools, to run a course with us: but I will engage, we beat them. As one of our predecessors, of pious memory, justly observed,

*That when the fight becomes a chace,  
He wins the day that wins the race:*

I have, therefore, no doubt about winning the day. At leg-work, and shovel-work, and at all other works, but some common good works and fighting works, our glorious army may be  
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pitched

pitched against the world. It does an old man's heart good to see, how nobly they cut and hack even nature herself, how they drive the dust and dirt about upon occasion, and with what mighty pretty uniforms their sweet persons are adorned. They are the essence of decency and cleanliness, and the very quintessence of honour and courage!—Our convention go on with their new state of Great Britain, and gravely tell us, that “her credit is sunk.” With submission I must observe, that, if their former observations be true, this must be true of course; so that here is a little of what pedants call *battology*, in which art many of our friends, both in Congress and convention, have made a wonderful proficiency.—“Her trade ruined.” So ruined, that her customs in the last year only brought her in £. 80,000 *sterling* more than in the year before, which, because it was not gained by our trade, must certainly be a loss. However, at all events, that is a trifle with us, who have attained the true philosopher's stone, and can turn, not only base metal but *base paper* into gold at any time. If *Paracelsus* and *Boyle* were in being, we could teach them wonders in our political alchymy, and shew them a greater wonder too than they ever found, that there are many thousands all alive and willing to believe us. We can transmute error into truth, so as to make it pass current, and by our sovereign touch, like the touch of *Midas*, can convert all things, even our dreams, into gold.—“Her inhabitants divided.” And divided they most certainly are. They are divided into counties, towns, and parishes. They are more permanently divided by rivers  
and



and by seas. There is a great division between the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland. They are separated by everlasting bounds, or, at least, till St. George's Channel be dry, and the Tweed shall cease to flow. If there be any other divisions, of which I have not sufficiently heard, or which are founded more in whim than in nature, in speculation than in fact; our own admirable whims may perhaps heal them all, or, like the coalescence of acids and alkalis, cause them to ferment till they become perfectly neutral. For Britons eternally to divide, however, upon *political* principles, for *our sakes*, is rather too much to be expected, even by *us* in our uncommon greatness of faith. Our most wonderful ingenuity cannot prove it to be *their interest*; and it is no very cogent reason to give, that *they* must act against their own advantages, because *we* have been wise enough to act against our's.—“Her King unpopular, and her ministers execrated.”—His Majesty is unpopular; that is, *not one* of the *populace*, as we republicans would wish to see him. We want “an empire all of kings,” not a King of an empire, whom, besides, we cannot consider as one of ourselves, “contaminated with vices,” and living “without sense of duty to his Creator;” because the King is a man of notorious virtue, and really lives (without our parade and pretensions) an irreproachable, sober life. This alone is sufficient to make him unpopular with *us*, who hate religion most horribly, when we either can get nothing by it, or are obliged to hold it with a strict morality.—And as to his

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ministers,

ministers, they must be *execrated* and execrable too, when they will not allow of or follow us in "our many shameful vices," but think it right to keep us to our former oaths and professions of allegiance, and to make us observe the laws of the land. They might have been reckoned a part of the most "illustrious band," if they would have made, like some honest patriots, dark and dismal representations of the state of the nation; if they would have given up all the British trade to our disposal; if they would have yielded the pre-eminence of dignity and power to us; or suffered the nation at all times to be loaded with taxes for *our* protection, so that we might never contribute a copper. Away with such men from the earth: they are too honest and wise for our management!—"She is overwhelmed with a monstrous debt (thanks be to us!) cut off from the VAST revenue heretofore obtained by taxes on American produce." I know what the *debt* is; but I never could learn the *revenue*, and much less the VAST revenue, which Great Britain hath obtained by us. Perhaps, it is beyond the power of numbers; or, if not, yet if it were only set against the *monstrous overwhelming debt*, chiefly contracted on our behalf, it might make some folks look rather awkwardly. After all, vulgar arithmetic is vulgar stuff, as I have already observed, and much too low for the soaring genius and dignity of our renowned convention.—"Her West-India islands in a starving condition." This is mentioned, undoubtedly, out of meer *pity*. However, if those islands were  
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to apply to *us* proprietors of this vast continent, I know we should wisely imitate the example of the five wise virgins in scripture, and say, *Go to them that sell, and buy for yourselves*; and most likely for the very same reason.—“ Her ships taken; her merchants involved in bankruptcy.” I suppose the convention must mean, *all* her ships and *all* her merchants; or at least they wish *us* to believe it. They are great latitudinarians in these cases, and give to our faith just as wide scope as we please. This they call *liberty of conscience*; and their consciences surely have liberty enough, for they are stopt by no manner of bounds. It happens, however, rather unlucky for us, that the last accounts from England treat of matters in a very different strain. They tell us that the demand for manufactures was never greater; that the manufacturing towns are overwhelmed, not with debt, but with business; that they have quicker returns for their labours than formerly; that the only broken merchants are some famous *patriotic* merchants, who minded business so much abroad, that they had not time to take care of any at home; that the resentment of the nation is raised to a very high pitch, on account of our *many shameful vices* and want of gratitude; and that they behold with pity and commiseration the calamitous situation into which we have driven the poor innocent people of this country. Our convention says, “ it is right and just, that the wicked should be punished by their seducers.” So say I: but let the seducers be punished

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punished too for making them wicked : and then I fancy the turn of some folks would come very shortly. To which let all the people say, *Amen.*

INTEGER.

LET.



## L E T T E R VII.

PERMIT me to trouble you with one letter more upon the subject of our convention of the Fish-Kill, in which I hope to wind up the matter, and then leave you and my Readers to their own contemplations. I know not how it happens, but when one is got into the chapter of politics, or begun with (as his polite Excellency of New-Jersey, Master *Billy Livingston*, expresses it) the discussion of "bankrupts, "bullies, and blockheads," it is difficult to get out of the one, and unpleasant to leave the other, till both are exhausted and dispatched. Of these last gentry we have quite a sufficient stock. Our political field is perfectly over-run with them. Yet, old as I am, I hope to live and see the day, when these rats, these vipers and vermin, in the shape of men, shall no longer prove the curse and detestation of our country. —But, that I may not grow testy, let me recur to the cooling reflections from the Fish-Kill.

Our worthy convention, from the dismal picture they have shewn us of *British* affairs, properly enough conclude, that there is not room "to harbour the smallest doubt of *their own* being successful." In a very promising way

way most undoubtedly they are. We have a plenty of *men*; and, with respect to *money*, our treasury is quite inexhaustible. We have also paid off all the arrears of our *people* (I do not say *soldiers*;—that would be too *fierce* a name); and the utmost unanimity subsists among us. Our Congress have passed a new act of uniformity, which is to model soul and body, heart and purse, to their own opinion. And when we are all alike; “where in the world (says “Solomon Gundy) can be the difference?” In short, let us make a contrast, after the manner of the convention, between the two countries; and things will appear (*i. e.* we would have them appear) in the following order:

| GREAT BRITAIN.                  | AMERICA.                             |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Feeble and destitute.           | Strong and well-supported.           |
| Drained of men and money.       | Overflowing with men and money.      |
| In arrears to her soldiers.     | Army well clothed and exactly paid.  |
| Her credit sunk.                | Our credit high.                     |
| Her trade ruined.               | Our trade free and flourishing.      |
| Her inhabitants divided.        | Our inhabitants happy and unanimous. |
| Overwhelmed with debt.          | Our debt nothing at all.             |
| Her West-India islands starved. | We fat and well-liking.              |
| Her ships taken.                | Our own all safe.                    |
| Her merchants, bankrupts.       | Our merchants, rich and easy.        |

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He that runs may read; and I will not insult my Reader's understanding by a comment.

The good convention next recur to examples, in support of their argument; in imitation perhaps of the old divines, who used to split their subject into *doctrine, use, and application*. The first instance they hold forth to us, is the struggle, which the *Dutch* were enabled to make, against the efforts of *Spain*; and a very parallel case it is, as I shall endeavour to explain to my Reader. The inquisition had been introduced into the Low Countries, of which the provinces of Holland, Zealand, &c. made a part, under the Spanish government, by a prince bigotted to the Popish religion, and determined to shew no sort of mercy to those, who differed from him in opinion, or who would not affirm that a cake of common flour was really a piece of raw meat. Accordingly, this bigot, *Philip* the second of *Spain*, butchered hundreds of his Protestant subjects, because they would not subscribe to this said pretty article of Transubstantiation. *Elizabeth*, Queen of England, was then at war with Spain; and therefore, partly out of regard to Protestantism, and partly from good policy, to reduce the then formidable power of her enemy, she aided the Dutch in the most effectual manner, and finally procured the establishment both of their civil and religious liberties.—Now, all the world must see, that our situation is and has been perfectly similar. We have been persecuted on account of our religion. There never has been any thing like religious liberty or religious toleration among us. None could profess his principle, or go to

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Heaven in the road which pleased him best, We have *therefore* resisted, and' resisted unto blood. Being very near at hand to *our several great allies*, as the *Dutch* were to queen *Elizabeth*, it may be presumed that we are able to combine, as they did, the most powerful force against *Britain*; and especially, if it be considered, that we are entirely masters of the sea. It was the interest likewise of several *German* states to countenance the *Dutch* against the spreading influence of *Spain*; and being upon *one tract* of country, they could supply them with infinite resources beyond the possibility of prevention; which is exactly *our* case too, as may be seen by a very cursory view of a map of the world. Thus, considering the heavy burdens we have long endured, the unutterable oppressions we have ever sustained, the chains that have been thrown upon our consciences, the miseries we have always undergone, through the "arbitrary domination of Britain," on the one hand; and the great alliances we have formed very near and very ready to help us, the disposition those allies are in to expend the riches of their monarchy to support us in our views of a Republic, and their great love to the Protestant religion and liberty, on the other hand; I say, considering all this, we have every reason to think, that we shall soon be in as happy a situation as the *Dutch* commonwealth is at this day. This *free* Republic, however, it is but fair to inform my Reader, is blest with a government not merely democratical, as many ignorantly suppose, but absolutely aristocratical; in which (says the late Lord *Chesterfield*) "the people



" *ple* have not the *least share*, either *themselves*, or  
 " *by representatives of their own choosing* : they  
 " have nothing to do but to *pay* and *grumble*." Now, this is exactly the plan of our Congress, and for very wise ends no doubt of their own.

The examples of *Switzerland* and *England*, when oppressed by tyrants, are next adduced, and are equally apposite to our case with the above recited instance of *Holland*. The King of Great Britain, as a proof of his tyrannical intentions, has sent over commissioners to hear our complaints, and to take the necessary steps for the redress of our grievances; but they are not men of our cast : they are not " contaminated," as we are, " with many shameful vices," and therefore we have most religiously resolved to shed all the blood and ruin all the property of the country, rather than negotiate with them. We would not even take the least bit of paper from them, unless they acknowledged us to be, what we must instantly disclaim ourselves to be, in case any agreement should possibly arise. This shews with what sincerity we mean to terminate all disputes, and how ready we are to relinquish every assumption of power.

Next follows the peroration of our excellent *Fish-Kill* representatives. " If freedom be our birth-right, let us not sell it for a mess of *pot-tage*, nor suffer it to be torn from us by the hand of violence." The author of *Common Sense* and *the Crisis*, admirably illustrates this beautiful allusion. " He that would sell his birth-right for a little salt (says he) is as worthless as he who sold it for *porridge* with-

“ out salt.” In this wonderful tractation upon *porridge* and *pottage*, I own I am not a sufficient adept in the culinary art to make the proper distinctions, and therefore cannot say, whether they are, or are not, really one and the same thing. I can only aver, that porridge or pottage, without salt, must be nearly as insipid as an argument without sense; and that I freely relinquish my share in the mess for an encouragement to our porridge dissertators. But the question is, What has all this mess of porridge or pottage to do with our business? Every man, surely, has a right to eat his mess in his own way. If he chose to take it boiling hot, and so burn his mouth; I should not call it liberty, if he chose likewise to shed it upon my legs, merely because we differed in our explanations of the word *freedom*. In a state of true freedom, every man has a right to enjoy, and certainly to conceal, his own opinion, without the danger of being sent to jail, and of having his family ruined upon account of it. None but *inquisitors*, who are the *worst*, and the *meanest* tyrants in the world, ever attempt to rummage the closets of peoples hearts, and to extort reluctant declarations from them. Patrons of *true* liberty never act in this manner; they love generous sentiments, free and unconstrained professions, an upright manly conduct, solid and just principles, and a uniform simplicity of heart and life. Darkness, distrust, mysteriousness, and all the other indications of a cunning narrow soul, are their abhorrence and disdain. Slyness and policy are very widely different; and good and sensible minds understand their difference,

ence, and can see, that as the one will sooner or later defeat itself, the other will deserve, if not answer, its own expectations. People of this spirit will never part with liberty upon any considerations; but they know *what* liberty is, and can distinguish it from anarchy and licentiousness, from faction and intrigue, from the dictates of a mob, as well as from the dictates of a prince. Liberty abhors "the hand of violence," borne by any kind of person, whether covered by the glove of patriotism, or bare as the impudence of vice. It covets peace; and it courts security. If our convention meant all this, every honest man must agree with them, and must detest those profligate characters, who have made liberty a problem among us, and excited, instead of allayed, the horrors of war. Every honest man must also agree with them in the quotation they have adopted, that "if ever a test for the trial of spirits can be necessary, it is now. If ever those of *Liberty* and *Faction* ought to be distinguished from each other, it is now. If ever it is incumbent on the people to know truth, and to follow it, it is now."—But I am indulging the too serious humour of age.

I remember to have seen, when I was a lad, a useful compilation, by *Tuscanella*, of the most remarkable *Epitheta*, *Antitheta*, and *Adjuncta* found in the works of *Cicero*. It was formed professedly to mend the language of *Tyros* in the Latin tongue. Now I, who rejoice at any thing that looks like improvement in Art and Science, would most heartily recommend this book of our convention, as a model to youth

for the rarity of diction, the politeness of manner, and the elegance of style. I have heard of a very celebrated college at London, where extemporary *Philippics*, adorned with the most fishy, if not the most flowery, tropes and figures, are delivered with as much energy of action and spirit, as *Demosthenes* himself, were he alive, could possibly desire. Their arguments are perfectly feeling, and usually make a very forcible impression. But, as our country in other respects is surpassing all others, and as both the seat of empire and the seat of the Muses, are said to be destined for our Western world, I see no reason, why we should not have such an illustrious institution, as one of this kind, set up among us. I am sure we are immensely capable of it. I would therefore earnestly wish, that, among other new arrangements, we should have some endowment of this sort established: and I know of no fitter persons to be President and Vice-President of such a seminary of polite erudition, than the renowned authors of *Common Sense* and *the Crisis*, and of this godly *Address of our convention*. I would pitch them (to use the phrase of gamblers) against all the world for volubility and copiousness of speech, and for the salt and vinegar of expression. Such delicacy of sentiment, such elegance of language, such a marvellous and delightful diction, such copiousness, fervor, and what not, are to be found in their respective compositions, as render the style of *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*, in the comparison, as flat as dead beer. If it were not for trespassing upon the Reader's patience (I say nothing of *my own*) I would cull some choice  
flowers



flowers out of these political nosegays for his entertainment and amusement.—But this would likewise exceed the bounds I have promised. Suffice it, therefore, to add, for the critical character of these charming performers, that whether the new complexion they have given to the original meekness of Christianity, their pious expressions and still more pious purposes, their peaceable system of policy, their advantageous plan of commerce, and the respectable characters and fortunes of the authors, are duly considered, it is impossible for a sound mind not to believe in the *Integrity* and *Disinterestedness* of the men, and in the *Truth* and *Patriotism* of their works. In short, they are works that will *speak for them in the gate*, and that entitle the heads of the authors to a distinguished exaltation above it.

One word for myself, and I have done. I hope my dear brethren of the Fish-Kill will take in good part, my long and laborious illustration of their pious cogitations. I did not mean to rob them of the merit or the beauties of their performance; but to point out that merit, and to select those beauties. If I have failed in my humble attempt, their feelings may sympathize with my own; for failing is now in fashion, and we have the mutual comfort of being disappointed together. At least, let them pity the infirmities of old age, out of mere generosity: its mortifications and inquietudes they are by no means likely to endure. After all, the worst wish I have for them is, that while they are practising upon the public constitution, they may take good care  
of

of their own, and apply internally such lenitives and alteratives for the correction of peccant humours, as may render the more severe operation of outward remedies absolutely unnecessary. *Dixi.*

INTEGER.



THE END.